

Dear Sir or Madam,

This letter is in response to the FCC request for public comment on ET Docket No. 02-135 regarding spectrum policy. I am a Professor of Astronomy at the University of New Mexico, and frequently conduct experiments in radio astronomy, at the nearby Very Large Array and many other facilities.

Astronomy has many crucial roles in society. As a science that elicits a tremendous amount of fascination and enthusiasm from the general public, its value in enriching people's lives cannot be underestimated. Much of what we know about the formation of stars and planets, for example, derives from radio astronomy. Furthermore, astronomy, like all sciences, creates the body of basic research that is so important for our country. Today's basic science research is tomorrow's new technology, economic strength and competitiveness. Astronomical research has resulted in new technologies in the areas of security and surveillance, semiconductors and medical imaging, for example. Radio astronomy has been on the forefront of development of low-noise radio receivers. A critical factor in the success of radio astronomy is in the protection of parts of the spectrum for its use and the establishment of radio-quiet zones. In this very real sense, then, any market-oriented approach to spectrum policy should give very high weight to the needs of the radio astronomy community, which should be directly involved in policy decisions.

Sincerely,

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